

Message Text

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72

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 EA-11 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 DRC-01

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R 081558Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6402

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

USINT CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1636

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR XF

SUBJ: PLO ATTITUDES RE PFLP TERRORIST ACTIVITY

REF: BEIRUT 1544 (NOT SENT TOKYO)

SUMMARY: LATEST PFLP TERRORIST OPERATIONS IN SINGAPORE AND
KUWAIT, WHICH CLEARLY MOTIVATED BY "REJECTIONIST" ANTIPATHY TO ME
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SETTLEMENT EFFORT, APPEAR TO BELIE NOTION THAT "MODERATE" ELEMENTS

IN FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT MAY BE GAINING WIDER SUPPORT FOR PLO ASSOCIATION WITH THAT EFFORT. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPT WILL HAVE NOTED THAT 'ARAFAT AND OTHER PLO "MODERATES" HERE HAVE MADE NO PUBLIC COMMENT ON JAN 31 AND FEB 6 PFLP TERRORIST OPERATIONS IN SINGAPORE AND KUWAIT, IN CONTRAST TO THEIR SWIFT DENUNCIATION OF AND DENIAL OF PLO INVOLVEMENT IN FEB 2 SEIZURE OF GREEK SHIP IN KARACHI HARBOR (FBIS M031220). NEVER-THELESS, PLO (Wafa) DAILY BULLETIN ON FEB 6 CLAIMED PLO LEADERSHIP WAS "SURPRISED" BY RAID ON JAPANESE EMB IN KUWAIT AND VIEWED IT AS PARTICULARLY HARMFUL TO PALESTINIAN CAUSE AT TIME "WHEN INTERNATIONAL INTEREST...IN RESTORING LEGITIMATE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS HAS INCREASED ON OFFICIAL AND POPULAR LEVELS". Wafa MOANED THAT FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT IS NOW IN DIRE NEED OF UNITY AND DISCIPLINE ON PART OF ALL ITS CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS, BUT THAT KUWAIT OPERATION HAD SHOWN THESE QUALITIES TO BE WOEFULLY LACKING. IT ADDED: "PLO LEADERSHIP CONSIDERS THIS OPERATION WILL CREATE NOTHING BUT NEGATIVE IMPRESSION ON INTERNATIONAL OPINION WHICH ZIONISTS WILL EXPLOIT TO TAINT OUR JUST STRUGGLE WITH TERRORIST IMAGE". (WE NOTE WITH SOME IRONY THAT SAME Wafa BULLETIN, AS RECENTLY AS JAN 24, WAS HELPING LAY GROUNDWORK FOR SINGAPORE AND KUWAIT INCIDENTS BY FULMINATING AGAINST JAPAN'S "HYPOCRISY" IN PRETENDING SUPPORT ARAB CAUSE WHILE IMPROVING ITS POLITICAL, COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL TIES WITH ISRAEL.)

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT 'ARAFAT, AFTER BEING APPROACHED BY KUWAITI AMBASSADOR HERE FEB 6 FOR ASSISTANCE IN RESOLVING SITUATION IN KUWAIT, FOUND HIMSELF DEFIED BY PFLP'S AHMED YAMANI, WHO REJECTED HIS OFFER OF MEDIATION AND JUSTIFIED PFLP BEHAVIOR WITH HARD-LINE ANTI-ME SETTLEMENT SENTIMENTS SIMILAR TO THOSE EXPRESSED IN PFLP'S EARLIER STATEMENTS RE SINGAPORE INCIDENT (BEIRUT 1310 AND FBIS M061104). SINCE THEN, 'ARAFAT AND CO HAVE MAINTAINED EMBARRASSED SILENCE ON WHOLE AFFAIR.

3. COMMENT: ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS ARE SCARCELY IN HARMONY WITH ALLEGED POSITIVE TREND TOWARD "UNITY" AMONG PLO "MODERATES" (PRIMARILY FATAH'S LEADERSHIP) AND "REJECTIONISTS" (PRIMARILY PFLP) RE IDEA OF PLO ASSOCIATION WITH SETTLEMENT EFFORT REPORTED REFTEL. IN FACT, WE READ FEB 6 Wafa HANDWRITING NOT ONLY AS CLEAR INDICATION THAT PLO LEADERSHIP IS

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AS DIVIDED AS EVER ON THAT ISSUE, BUT ALSO AS ADMISSION THAT IT HAS LOST WHATEVER CONTROL IT THOUGHT IT EXERCISED OVER ACTIVITIES OF FEDAYEEN EXTREMISTS. WE WONDER, INTER ALIA, HOW SINGAPORE AND KUWAIT INCIDENTS ARE LIKELY TO AFFECT PLO'S FUTURE RELATIONS WITH GOK AND OTHER MODERATE ARAB GOVTS, NOW THAT THEY HAVE WITNESSED MOST OBVIOUS PROOF TO DATE OF FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT'S INABILITY TO ACHIEVE--IN THEORY AS WELL AS IN PRACTICE--CONSTRUCTIVE UNITY ON BASIC ISSUES.

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